A Study in

Modern Dance Positions

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LADY'S LEFT HAND

GENTLEMAN'S RIGHT HAND

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Lady's Left Hand

The Lady's left hand is the most important study in arm and hand positions for the lady. Even the average good dancer has probably never given attention to these details that are so essential to a graceful and finished dancer. A little practice will not only work wonders in the presentation of your work, but it will start you on the right road toward the development of art throughout the whole course of your human expression.

No. 1 in this series is a Teacher's position, being low enough down on the gentleman's back to give the lady teacher perfect control of her pupil guiding him through the steps and figures of the dance of which he is as yet unfamiliar. The hand is placed firmly and gracefully—not cramped or severe.

No. 2 is really a fault that is much complained of, as many ladies spoil the pleasure of an otherwise pleasant dance by persistently "grabbing" or "hooking" their partners' arm in this fashion.

It is sure to hamper the gentleman in the free expression of his "lead" and the perfect dance depends much upon the gentleman's unrestricted control of the situation.

The male psychology of a finished ball-room dancer is one of perfect Leadership—Directing and Guiding, selecting steps and avoiding contact with other objects while progressing the ball-room floor.

The Female psychology is quite the opposite being one of perfect submission (naturally) to the male Leadership. This is quite an art as it requires a continual sensing, almost a moment in advance, of the intent and purpose of the male lead without verbal communication. In fact it is one of the most fascinating elements of The Dance, viz., the pride of knowing that you can follow or sense perfectly the "lead."

The fascination to the male dancer is in knowing that his perfect "lead" is at all times capable of correct interpretation.

No. 3 shows the most graceful and artistic position in this series, as the thumb is out of sight and the fingers are artistically posed and are not "gripping" the gentleman's shoulder. The necessary pressure here for sensing the "lead" is accomplished by the thumb resting gently upon the gentleman's shoulder.

No. 4 is another very pretty and acceptable position, which requires more subtle sensing of the "lead," as the gentleman's purpose is expressed more plainly from the action of his shoulder blade which is somewhat below the position taken by the lady's hand in this picture.

No. 5 is a very ***chic*** position and is considered quite proper even in our best New York Society. It shows compatability and an inclination toward companionable languor. It is not offensive to the onlooker but on the contrary it is a pleasant sight to all with the probable exception of Mrs. Grundy.

No. 6 is very similar to No. 3 only lacking in spirit and vitality and allows the thumb to show which is not advisable.

No. 7 is quite common but shows rather a lack of the artistic.

No. 8 is the extreme of No. 5 and is permissible only to sweethearts and Table D'Hote diners.

RE-CAPITULATION

The three most desirable positions in this series are Nos. 3, 4 and 6.

Gentleman's Right Hand

The Gentleman's right hand is the "Hand that rules the Dance." Not only this hand but the entire right arm is used to convey to your partner how you wish the dance expressed. The character and ability of your work depends much upon how you use and hold the right hand and arm.

The Dance of today covers such a wide field of steps, tempos and other forms of expression that the proficient and artistic dancer finds it necessary to change the position of the right hand from time to time during a dance in order to obtain the best results in his "lead" and in the art of presentation. The most frequent positions used by the expert Modern Dancer, will be recapitulated at the close of this section.

No. 1 is an old-fashioned position although it is still advocated by passe teachers. It is not only old-fashioned but it is lifeless, lacks control and is useless to express the finer qualities of our artistic Modern Dances. The hand in this picture is at the waist-line, which is much too low for a graceful and modern position.

No. 2 is a "freak" position adopted by persons of an extravagant character. It is "style" ***overdone*** and is as undesirable as wearing a loud suit of clothes with a vulgar display of enormous diamonds. Also, the Gentleman's left hand is stretched out flat against the flat palm of the Lady's right hand. all of which is at least two years old as dancing styles go and is not seen any more among up-to-date dancers. The position of the lady's left hand, with the palm facing outward, is also extravagant and undesirable.

No. 3 is a very artistic side position that is used in "leading" certain figures, viz, The Tango, particularly the corte; going into full or semi-open steps; sudden and marked changes in a figure; and in figures where it is desired to display the Lady to the best advantage.

No. 4 is entirely "out of order" and should positively be prohibitive to all except married couples in the privacy of their own apartment when trying out a new record on the Grofonolo!

No. 5 is carrying things too far, particularly the right

arm and hand. It is presumed that this style of dancer has no sweetheart of his own and is "making hay while the sun shines," or has gone into training preparatory to future prospects.

No. 6 is of the same calibre as No. 5 but is hindered from going further on account of a shorter arm or a shorter nerve, as the case may be. In either case the difference is merely a matter of degree, as in both pictures the arm is placed too far around the lady's waist to be considered either proper or graceful.

No. 7 and 8 are very graceful positions of the right hand and arm, as the Lady can be perfectly controlled from this position. It is the position that is mostly used by good dancers and a change from this position is only necessary in exceptional cases where the nature of the step or "lead" requires a special position. The hand in this position is well above the waist line, as it *should* be for perfect control.

No. 9 is a "Tango" or "open" position that is used by a great number of expert society dances, but I advise the position shown in No. 3 as being more graceful, giving more freedom and showing a higher artistic quality.

No. 10 is decidedly vulgar, entirely uncalled for and utterly useless to express the art of the Modern Dance.

No. 11 is a duplicate of No. 3 but lacking in the grace and art of the finger positions—probably necessary if your partner is a novice.

No. 12 is a bad fault that is often seen among ball-room dancers. It has more the attributes of a wrestling "hold" than a dancing position.

No. 13 is very similar to No. 7 and No. 8 except that in this pose the back of the thumb only is resting on the Lady's hand with the fingers gracefully arranged in a natural pose. This hand position is advised especially for contest dancing where every little detail must be considered if you hope to carry off the honors.

RE-CAPITULATION.

The four most desirable positions in this series are Nos. 3, 7, 8 and 13.

Gentleman's Left Hand

The Gentleman's left hand probably attracts more notice among a greater number of people than any other part of the dancer's position.

Aamong good dancers the position of this hand is as liable to variation as are the styles of dresses.

During the past few years, since the Modern Dances were first introduced, the "fashionable" position of this hand has passed through quite a series of popular "holds," as they are sometimes called.

College boys are more apt to attempt the many strange innovations that are only short-lived and do not maintain among the more artistic dancers.

The present popular position which has weathered several recent attempts to displace it and which is most popular at our society contests is the position shown in the two full length figures at the top of this chart—a closer view of this same position is given in No. 5 of the series we are now discussing.

This position of the hand and arm, is:—not too high nor is it too low—there is plenty of life and action shown here which is essential in the good dancer. If the arm is held too low it gives a lifeless, inert and lackadaisical appearance.

If the arm is held too high it places the dancer in the freak class who usually exaggerate and overdo everything.

You will notice also in this position that the thumb is not showing, nor are any of the fingers protruding.

A safe rule for the average dancer is "never allow a thumb or finger to become separated from the rest of the hand."

It requires long study and practice to acquire a graceful *open* hand.

No. 1 in this series is identical with the position I have just been describing, with the one exception that the gentleman's hand and arm from the elbow down is held on a horizontal line in place of the perpendicular position shown in the full length figures. This position is somewhat difficult to accquire correctly as great care must be taken to avoid pushing or driving the Lady's arm and hann to a position further to the rea than her shoulder.

When this position has been maintained correctly I have seen it win many of our best New York Contests.

No. 2 is bad form, as the arm is too straight and too low. This position would only be temporarily permissible in order to avoid contact with some object or another couple.

The one unpardonable sin in ball-room dancing is to "bump" into anyone or anything, or even to touch ever so slightly the flying ends of another person's clothes.

No. 3. The arm is too stiff and straight and is sure to get you in trouble. When I see an arm like this on a ball-room floor I avoid it with the same dread that I would a Buzz-saw, as I have no desire for a black eye or dislocated neck.

No. 4. Many teachers and critics may object to this position but I do not like to be critical or severe. Most anything can be abused. If this position is taken properly I should advise it under certain conditions. It is *safe*, no fear of swinging your arm into some one's eye. It is restful and does not tire the arm. We do not always dance for others to look at and criticise us, —sometimes we dance just because we enjoy the company of our partner and desire to carry on a slight conversation during the dance.

This position meets this requirement as you do not have to devote your attention to keeping your hand out of some one's physiognomy.

No. 5 has already been thoroughly discussed as a popular and desirable ball-room position.

No. 6 shows another slight variety of holding the Gentleman's left hand which is preferred by some expert dancers.

No. 7 is a teacher's position which gives the male instructor full control of hie pupil.

No. 8 illustrates the village cut-up putting across a master-stroke of De Luxe Style!

RE-CAPITULATION

The three most desirable positions in this series are Nos. 1, 5, 6.